



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

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SPECIES YEARS AND THE 2007 CAMPAIGN

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Species Years and the 2007 Campaign

1. Origin of “Year of ...” Campaigns

The main goal of the Convention’s Outreach and Communication Plan is the identification of actions and initiatives for raising the awareness of threats faced by migratory animals. Parties adopted the Plan at COP8 in November 2005.

Each year, the Plan will focus on different animal species covered by one or more of the CMS Agreements, and work with partners to increase awareness and outreach on that particular species or group of species. 2006 was declared the IOSEA (a CMS related agreement on the conservation of turtles in the Indian Ocean and South East Asia) Year of the Turtle, with a specific focus on the IOSEA geographical area. More information on the Year of the Turtle can be found on: <http://www.ioseaturtles.org/yot2006/>.

2. 2007: the Year of the Dolphin campaign and partnership

With the support of two CMS agreements and an NGO partner (Wildlife and Dolphin Conservation Society), 2007 has been dedicated to the dolphin, a group of species which faces increasing threats posed to its survival worldwide,. Dolphins are flagship animals. Their charisma creates deep emotional responses especially among the young, and at the same time they face considerable challenges within their environment that have an effect on humans as well. Dolphins also have particular cultural significance, for example as species regularly depicted in art from prehistoric times. The exponential growth of the whale watching industry which includes dolphin watching also shows the major potential to promote sustainable, non-lethal use of these species to generate income and employment. The Year of the Dolphin in 2007 will capture public imagination and enthusiasm.

CMS is planning to develop initiatives, tools and actions for the Year of the Dolphin worldwide, and will invite all governments and civil society to join the campaign. Activities are expected to be particularly intense in the geographic areas covered by CMS Agreements on cetaceans: Mediterranean and Black Sea, Baltic and North Sea, as well as the Pacific Islands Region where a new Cetacean MoU is due to be signed in September 2006. Activities will also involve areas where agreements are planned for development: Central West Africa and South East Asia, or where CMS has cetacean conservation commitments such as South America and South Asia.

The Year of the Dolphin (YoD) Campaign is a unique opportunity for an innovative partnership involving the United Nations, Governments, intergovernmental organizations and the private sector, working together through different means towards the achievement of the same objectives.

The YoD Campaign has been planned in collaboration with ACCOBAMS - Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean and Contiguous Atlantic Area - and ASCOBANS - Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas. In addition, it will be able to count on the support and communications channels offered by the private sector, in particular by the tourism business (TUI AG), whose outreach potential through

tourist clients can effectively increase public awareness on dolphins. It will also use the expertise of the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS), a specialized organization for the conservation of cetaceans. Both TUI and WDCS are official partners of the initiative (and of CMS).

Moreover, given its educational content, the Year of the Dolphin will be included among official activities of the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development, a UNESCO-administered initiative covering the period 2005-2014.

More partners are expected to join once the main features of the Campaign are launched (September 2006), in order to register new activities (ranging from outreach to conservation actions) under the YoD banner. The website will be the main means to outreach to other organizations and provide governments, civil society and media with information on activities developed worldwide.

3. Activities initiated as of 10 September 2006

A number of initial activities are under development. These include:

- *Image and publicity*: Development of logo of the campaign (see logo above); appointment of H.S.H. Prince Albert of Monaco as Patron of the initiative
- *Information and public awareness*: Development of a dedicated Year of the Dolphin Website;
- *Education*: Educational material to be delivered to children in TUI destinations, and through UNESCO channels.
- *Promotion*: Promotional material and YoD merchandise supporting dolphin conservation.
- *Science and agreements development*: Organization of a scientific symposium and negotiation session for the development of the West African Small Cetaceans MoU;
- *Events and launches*: International launch in Monaco on 17 September 2006, presentation at ASCOBANS MOP, 20 September 2006, German launch in December 2006.
- *Research and science*: Two books on dolphin conservation will be published at the beginning and the end of the YoD respectively.

4. Governments' involvement

CMS and the YoD Patron will address a letter containing information on the YoD Campaign to all Ministries of the Environment worldwide. The letter will invite recipients to understand more about YoD by surfing the YoD website and explore suggested activities to be developed at the national level. Governments will be invited in particular to undertake conservation activities and public awareness campaigns, and to report on these directly to the CMS through the YoD website. Subsequently, these events will be featured on the YoD website.

Governments can also support the YoD Campaign more directly by providing financial assistance to the work of the YoD team within CMS and WDCS, by covering staff and educational material printing costs. Donor governments are requested to consider funding a special prize for dolphin conservation, to be awarded to the best small-scale conservation project presented through the YoD website.

5. Expected results

It is expected that the YoD Campaign will:

- ❑ Increase general awareness of adults/tourists in developed countries on dolphin conservation;
- ❑ Reach out and provide coastal communities in developing countries with educational material on dolphin conservation;
- ❑ Increase awareness and commitment of world governments on dolphin conservation, and give it a prominent role in national marine conservation agendas and plans;
- ❑ Create stronger partnerships and stimulate further action amongst non-governmental organizations dealing with marine conservation issues and reinforce their advocacy role;
- ❑ Directly involve a private business – TUI-AG - in a public awareness and conservation campaign, showing how UN objectives could be supported by and benefit private sector companies as well;
- ❑ Increase environmental awareness in businesses;
- ❑ Provide effective educational tools and information for children and their teachers on dolphin conservation, available on line;
- ❑ Allow relevant conservation MEAs to better fulfill their outreach and information mandates, by reaching out to a broader audience;
- ❑ Provide a common platform for joint activities and common goals for UN agencies, the private sector and NGOs, to be used as a model for future initiatives;
- ❑ Raise new and additional resources for dolphin conservation.

6. Future Campaigns

At the EUROBATs MOP which concluded on 6 September 2006 Parties agreed to a joint proposal by the CMS and EUROBATs Secretariats that 2008 should be designated “Year of the Bat”. It is at present intended that 2009 should be designated as “Year of the Gorilla”, complementing the critical phase of the current CMS initiative to develop an Article IV Agreement between the 10 gorilla range states of Western/Central Africa.

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- ❑ **Welcome the ‘Year of the...’ initiative and the 2007 and 2008 Campaigns for Dolphins and Bats;**
- ❑ **Invite Parties to undertake activities to support the YoD campaign and report on them, through the YoD website, to the Secretariat;**
- ❑ **Encourage Parties to support YoD related projects and activities of the CMS, related cetacean agreements and NGO partners.**